

**Rent Stabilization Commission  
City of West Hollywood  
Thursday, December 10, 2015 @ 7:00 PM  
West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room – Council Chambers  
625 North San Vicente Boulevard**

**Minutes**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Sanes called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chair Sanes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL:** Commission Secretary Laura Schoonover took roll call.

**PRESENT:**

Chair Gail Sanes, Vice Chair Richard Maggio, Commissioner Stephanie Harker, Commissioner David Gregoire, Commissioner Alexander Gurfinkel, Commissioner Josh Kurpies, Commissioner Rob Bergstein

**ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Director of Human Services and Rent Stabilization Elizabeth Savage, Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager Peter Noonan, Staff Attorney Jonathan Holub, Legal Services Mediator Joel Hecht, Rent Stabilization Information Coordinator Chris Uszler, and Commission Secretary Laura Schoonover.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

A motion was made by Commissioner Gregoire to approve the agenda for the December 10, 2015 meeting. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Maggio. The motion was approved (7-0-0).

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

A motion was made by Commissioner Bergstein to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2015 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harker. The motion was approved (6-0-1) with Commissioner Gurfinkel abstaining.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Tory Berger of West Hollywood spoke regarding his position as Public Safety Commission liaison to the Rent Stabilization Commission.

Dan Morin of West Hollywood spoke regarding the State of New York's "Freeze Your Rent" program and the possibility of instituting such a program in the City of West Hollywood. He also spoke regarding the Ellis Act.

## **DIRECTOR'S/MANAGER'S REPORT:**

Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager Peter Noonan reviewed the Director's/Manager's Look Ahead Calendar. Mr. Noonan announced that the December 24, 2015 Rent Stabilization Commission meeting has been cancelled.

## **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

Commissioner Maggio requested additional information from public speaker Dan Morin

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. THINGS TO KNOW: CITY'S MEDIATION SERVICES: The City's Mediator, Joel Hecht, provided an overview of the City's mediation services and answered questions from the Commission, including specific questions regarding mediating between a landlord and tenant when the landlord evicts under the Ellis Act.
- B. TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT RELOCATION REQUIREMENTS AND FEES. Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager Peter Noonan gave a report in which he reviewed proposed changes to the City's Rent Stabilization Ordinance.

Commissioner Bergstein requested clarification on housing options when a tenant is displaced. He also suggested that clarifying language be added to acknowledge the landlords responsibility for moving a tenant's personal items with the tenant or into storage.

Commissioner Kurpies asked if additional language could be added to the code regarding the landlord's responsibility for the storage and safe keeping of a tenant's belongings.

Commissioner Harker asked clarifying questions regarding the reasonable reimbursement costs incurred by the landlord.

Commissioner Gurfinkel asked how disagreements between landlords and tenants would be handled if they were unable to agree upon what reasonable housing or a reasonable expense was.

Commissioner Maggio and Commissioner Kurpies asked for clarification on how assets are used to determine if a tenant qualifies as low income.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Dan Morin of West Hollywood spoke about the Ellis Act and commented on the services for displaced tenants offered through Paragon Partners.

SUMMARY OF 2015 RSO BUILDING BLOCKS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PROPOSED 2016 CURRICULM. Rent Stabilization Information Coordinator Chris Uszler gave a report on the outcomes of the 2015 session and provided

information on the upcoming 2016 schedule, including three new classes. Mr. Uszler then answered questions from the Commission.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Dan Morin of West Hollywood spoke regarding the RSO Building Blocks curriculum and suggested a seminar be created to educate participants about the Ellis Act and the Costa Hawkins Rental Housing Act.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

Commissioner Bergstein spoke regarding an article in the Los Angeles Times about “no cause” evictions in Portland, Oregon and the impact that they have had on residents being able to find affordable housing. He also spoke regarding his recent attendance at the Apartment Owners Association’s annual holiday party. Commissioner Bergstein spoke regarding items he had raised at the November 12 Commission meeting and asked placed on the agenda of a future meeting: 1) Regarding public education on short term rentals, he has since found out the City of West Hollywood Code Compliance Division is already working on a campaign to educate the public and will be presenting a report to the Commission when the details have been finalized; 2) Regarding banning smoking in all residential rental buildings, he requested presentations from Marlene Gomez of UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and Ester Schiller of Smoke Free Air for Everyone Alliance be placed on the agenda of a future meeting. The topic was deferred to the Study Session which will be held in January.

Commissioner Harker thanked the public speakers from tonight and from previous meetings for their participation and for their involvement in voicing community concerns. She wished everyone a happy holiday.

Commissioner Gregoire thanked staff for the evening’s presentations and also wished everyone a happy holiday.

Commissioner Gurfinkel apologized for his absence at the November 12 meeting and took this opportunity to welcome new Commissioners Kurpies and Bergstein. He thanked staff for the evening’s presentations and wished everyone a happy holiday.

Chair Sanes thanked staff for their work throughout the year and wished everyone a happy holiday. She welcomed the new Commissioners and thanked the evening’s public speakers.

**STAFF COMMENTS:**

Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager Peter Noonan thanked Joel Hecht for his participation in the meeting. He went on to comment on Mr. Hecht’s role as a mediator and on the functions of the Rent Stabilization Information Coordinators. He commented on Mr. Morin’s concerns about eviction education. Mr. Noonan also referred the Commissioners to various items that were distributed to them at the beginning of the meeting. He wished everyone a happy holiday.

At this time Commissioner Gurfinkel made an additional request of staff. He asked if a feasibility report could be done on multilingual community meetings. The item was deferred to the Study Session meeting in January.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:24 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Rent Stabilization Commission will be held on January 14, 2016 in the West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room – Council Chambers.

These minutes were submitted by Laura Schoonover, Commission Secretary and approved by a motion of the Rent Stabilization Commission on this 14th day of January, 2016.

A copy of the audio recording of this meeting can be obtained from the City Clerk's office upon request.  
*(Disclaimer: Staff records the meetings for the sole purpose of composing the official meeting minutes; therefore the recordings are not of commercial quality.)*

ATTEST:

  
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Gail Sanes, Chair

  
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Commission Secretary